

IF I'M SO SMART, WHY IS
SCHOOL SO HARD?

Supporting Students with Asperger Syndrome in
Elementary General Education Classrooms

Academic Supports

**Supporting
comprehension**

**Supports for
written
language**

**Executive
functioning**

**General
classroom
support**

**If the mainstream
classroom is a
pressure cooker, take
it off the flame!**



Supporting Comprehension

Abstract language

Inference

Reading comprehension

Monitor Your Use of Language



- ▣ **Pause between sentences**
- ▣ **Only one instruction at a time**
- ▣ **Avoid sarcasm**
- ▣ **Metaphors and figures of speech are explained**
- ▣ **Avoid ambiguous instructions**
- ▣ **Only say “will you...” or “Can you...” if there is a choice**

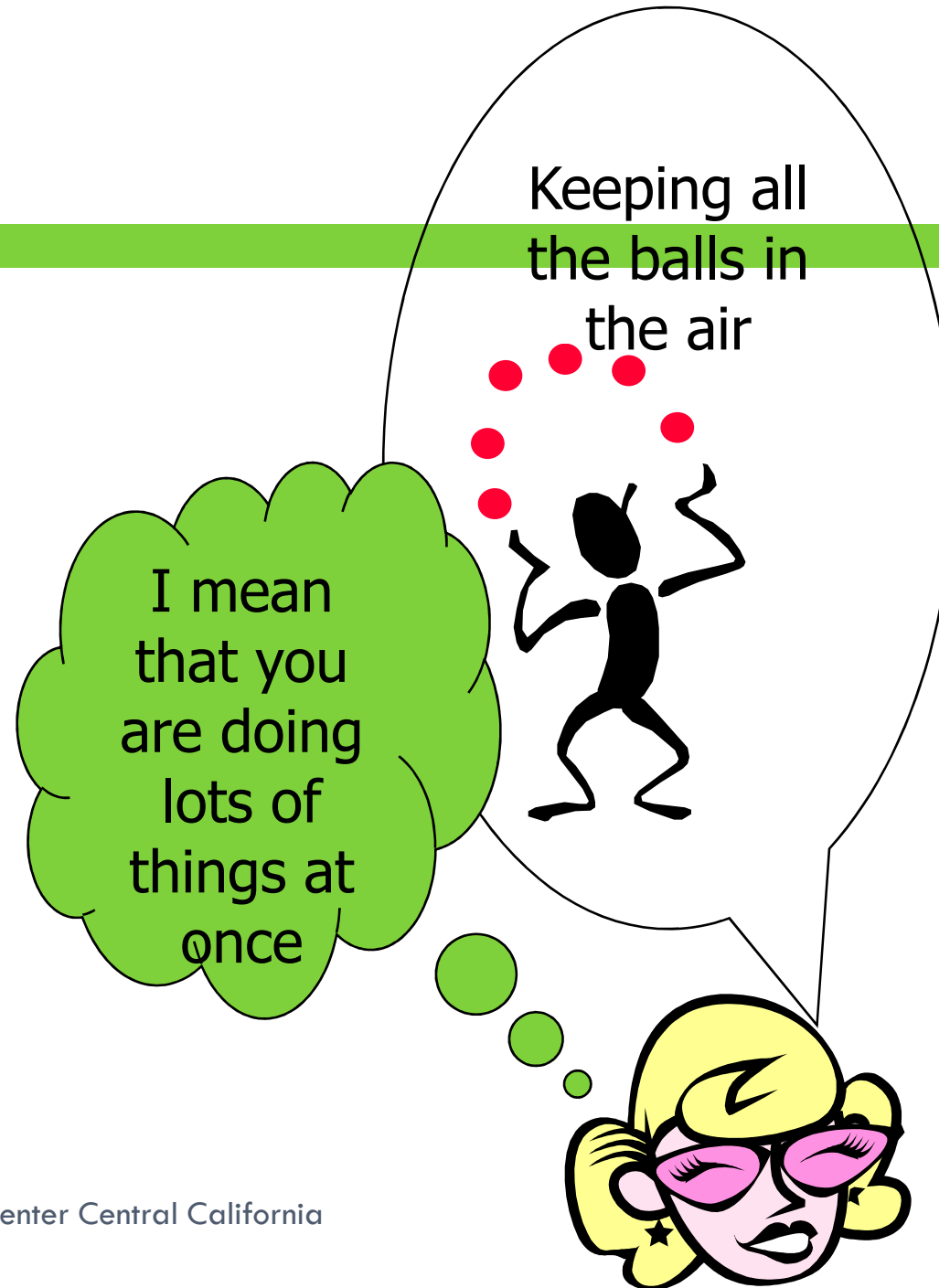
Literal Thinking


- **Students are very “concrete thinkers.” They do best when content is explicit and requires little interpretation.**
- **Figurative language is a mystery-teach figurative expressions, highlight them in text and in conversations. Prepare “idiom dictionaries.”**
- **Use cartooning to clarify figurative expressions.**

Cartooning

Cartooning can be used to:

- **Explain idioms**
- **Help students understand that thoughts and feelings are different**
- **Help to interpret social situations**





If you are having trouble with a particular idiom or metaphor, one that makes you eat humble pie, don't sweat it. Cool your jets and get a grip on yourself. If you play your cards right, you might find out that this program is right up your alley. So, stop running around like a chicken with its head cut off and quit spinning your wheels. If you need to, just catch some z's. If you don't get up on the wrong side of the bed, you might be able to wing it, find a meaning that fits the bill, and have a blast while you are at it. But hold the phone! I think that I'm getting carried away here and am about to lose my marbles...

(by Jeanette McAfee)

Inferential Thinking

- **Inferencing requires one to use both verbal and non-verbal information about a situation and make a guess.**
- **AS students learn “pools of information” but don’t see how they are related.**

Supporting Inferencing

- **Explicitly practice making inferences in small group work. Start with the very concrete. Teach the language of predicting. “I guess..” “I imagine that..” “I wonder if..”**
- **In literature and history, when the inference is essential for comprehension, state it explicitly. Ex: “The settlers at Jamestown died because they did not have enough food or shelter.”**

Supporting Inferencing

- **Work from what student can do well-list concrete information. Then through Venn diagrams, plot lines and concept maps lead to abstractions like:**
 - ▣ **How were the civil war and the revolutionary war alike and different?**
 - ▣ **What events led to the development of written language?**
 - ▣ **What issues led to the Civil War?**

Supporting Inferencing

- **Use Winner's “facilitating frameworks”**
 - **A way to build an extra level of structure and support to assist students in seeing relationships and making inferences.**
 - **Can be used for thinking about content (literature, history) or in preparation for a writing assignment.**
 - **Can be prepared by teacher, aide, or parent**

Today is March 1, 2005.

Bellwork / Mt LA

Wrestle Mania

Read Aloud

Recess

Bellwork / Mt LA

Pre-read / Readiness

Read : Highlight

Dragonwings

Lunch

Bellwork / Mt LA

Pre-read / Readiness

Read : Highlight

Dragonwings

Detention: Stephanie S., Josie

Predicting

- I guess / predict / imagine that...
- Based on... , I infer that...
- I hypothesize that...

Partner and group reporting

- We decided / agreed that...
- We concluded that...

As you read 13.5 please list the impacts or effect of Imperialism.

Gloria G

CAUSES

1. Economic Factors:
 - a. New Markets
 - b. Natural Resources
2. Political & Military Interests
 - a. Location of Military Bases
 - b. Nationalism
3. Humanitarian Interests
 - a. Missionary Impulse
 - b. Spread blessing of Western Civilization
4. Social Darwinism
 - a. Racial Superiority
 - b. Destruction of weaker nations

I M P E R I A L I S M

EFFECTS

1. Economic Impact
 - a. Money economy
 - b. Economic Dependence
 - c. Modernization
2. Cultural Impact
 - a. schools and hospitals
 - b. Religion
 - c. Old and New ways
 - d. Westernization
3. Political Impact
 - a.
 - b.

Big Idea



- **We need to support student's understanding of narrative text in the same way we support them in understanding social thinking.**
 - **Thorough investigation of the perspective of the primary characters**
 - **Making motivation and intention explicit (comic strips)**

Reading Comprehension

□ Work on:

- Identifying characters personality, mood, thoughts.
- Identifying how the main character relates to other characters.
- Understanding/identifying each problem.
- Identifying the choices the character made to solve the problem.
- Lead to considering alternate outcomes.

Collaborative Strategic Reading

- **A package of comprehension strategies:**

Before Reading

1. Preview

- **Brainstorm: What do we already know about the topic?**
- **Predict: What do we think we will learn about the topic when we read the passage?**

During Reading



2. Click and Clunk

- ❑ **Were there any parts that were hard to understand (clunks)?**
- ❑ **How can we fix the clunks? Use fix-up strategies. Ex:**
 - **Reread the sentence and look for key ideas to help you understand the word.**
 - **Reread the sentence with the clunk and the sentences before or after the clunk looking for clues**
 - **Look for a prefix or suffix in the word**
 - **Break the word apart and look for smaller words**



3. Get the Gist

- What is the most important person, place, or thing?**
- What is the most important idea about the person, place or thing?**

After Reading



4. Wrap Up

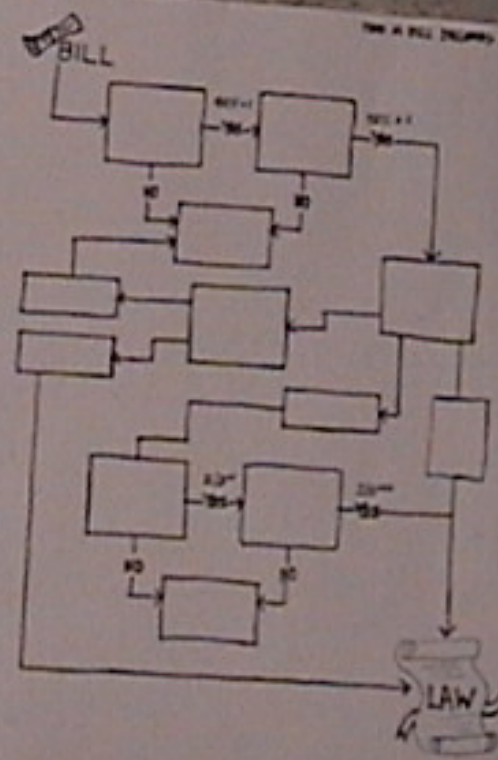
- ▣ **Ask Questions:** What questions would show we understand the most important information? What are the answers to those questions?
- ▣ **Review:** What did we learn?

Use Graphic and Semantic Organizers

- **Graphic organizers can:**
 - **Help students focus on text structure as they read**
 - **Provide students with tools they can use to examine and visually represent relationships in a text**
 - **Help students write well-organized summaries of a text**

[illegible]

President veto the bill	Congress is in session (after 10 days)	NOT = 1 members vote YES	NOT = 1 members vote YES
bill introduced to the Senate	Congress is out of session (one hour)	NOT = 1 members vote YES	NOT = 1 members vote YES
The President does nothing	The President signs the bill	1/3rd members vote YES	1/3rd members vote YES
bill "dies"	bill "dies"	1/3rd members vote YES	1/3rd members vote YES
bill introduced to the House	bill is sent to the President	bill sent back to the Senate	bill becomes a law
bill sent back to the House	bill "dies"		



CLIMAX: Problem/Solution

Story Hill

Episode: Problem, Action, Solution

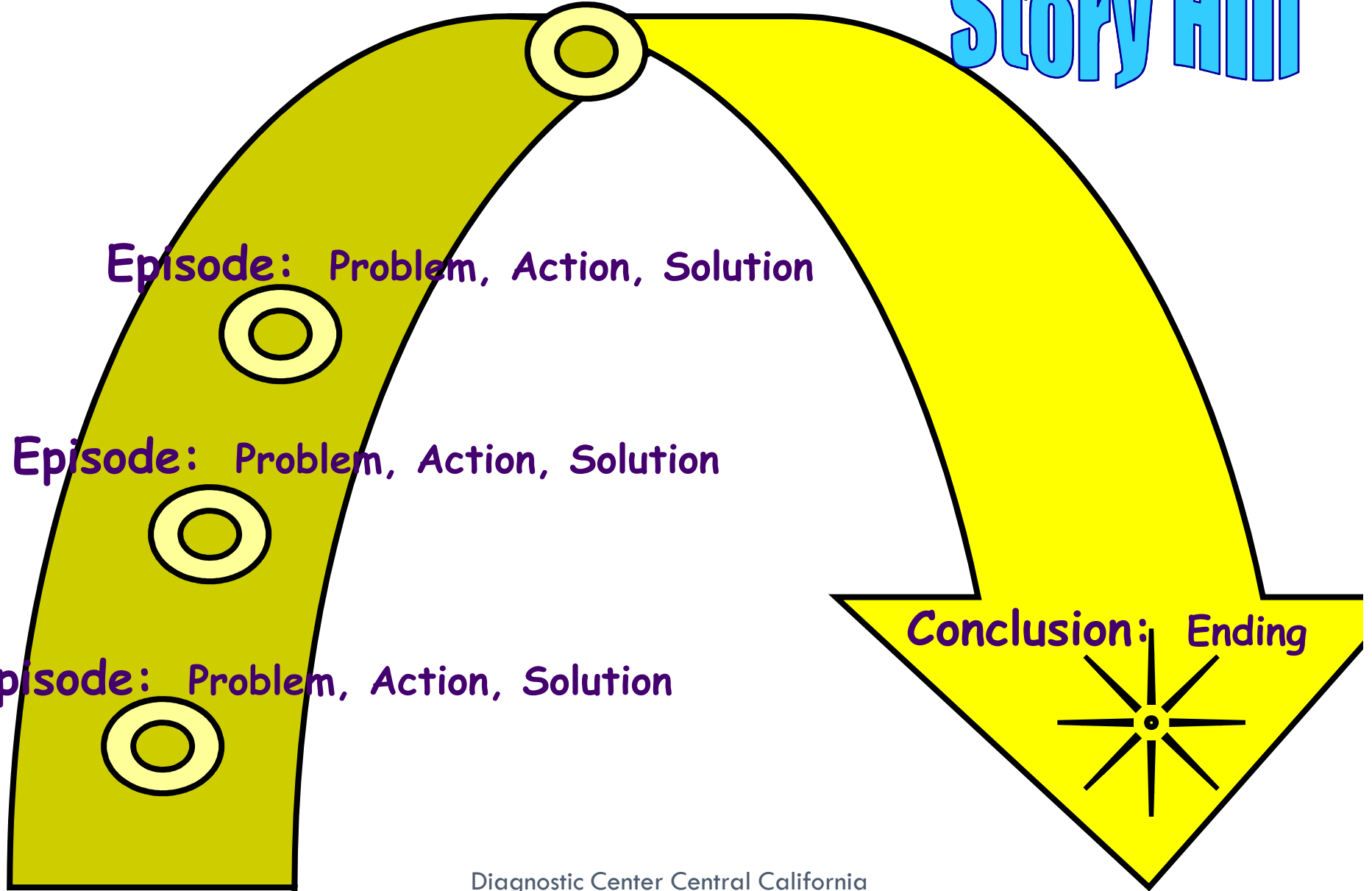
Episode: Problem, Action, Solution

Episode: Problem, Action, Solution

Conclusion: Ending

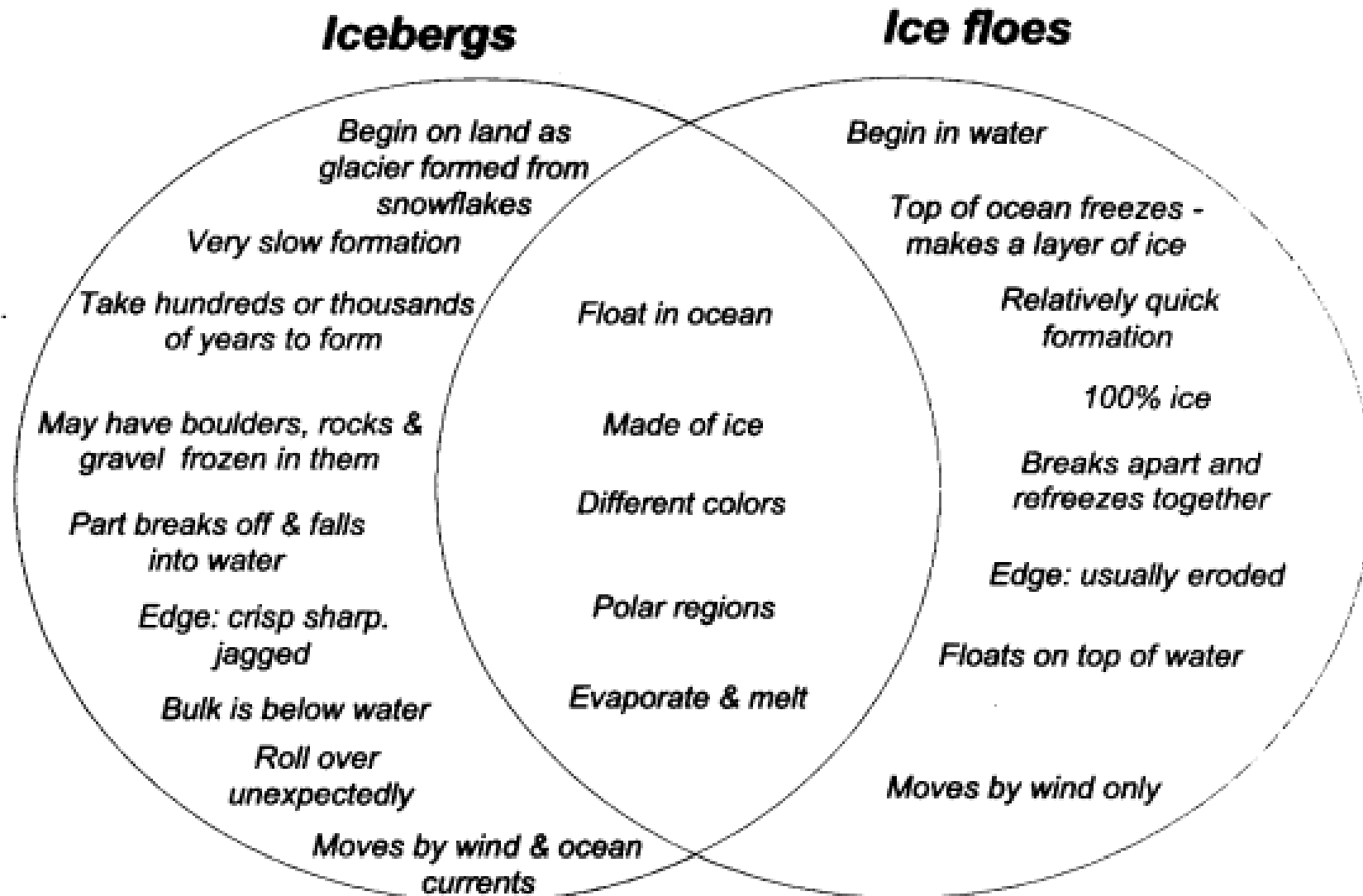
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Introduction: Character, Setting, Problem



Compare / Contrast

Venn diagram

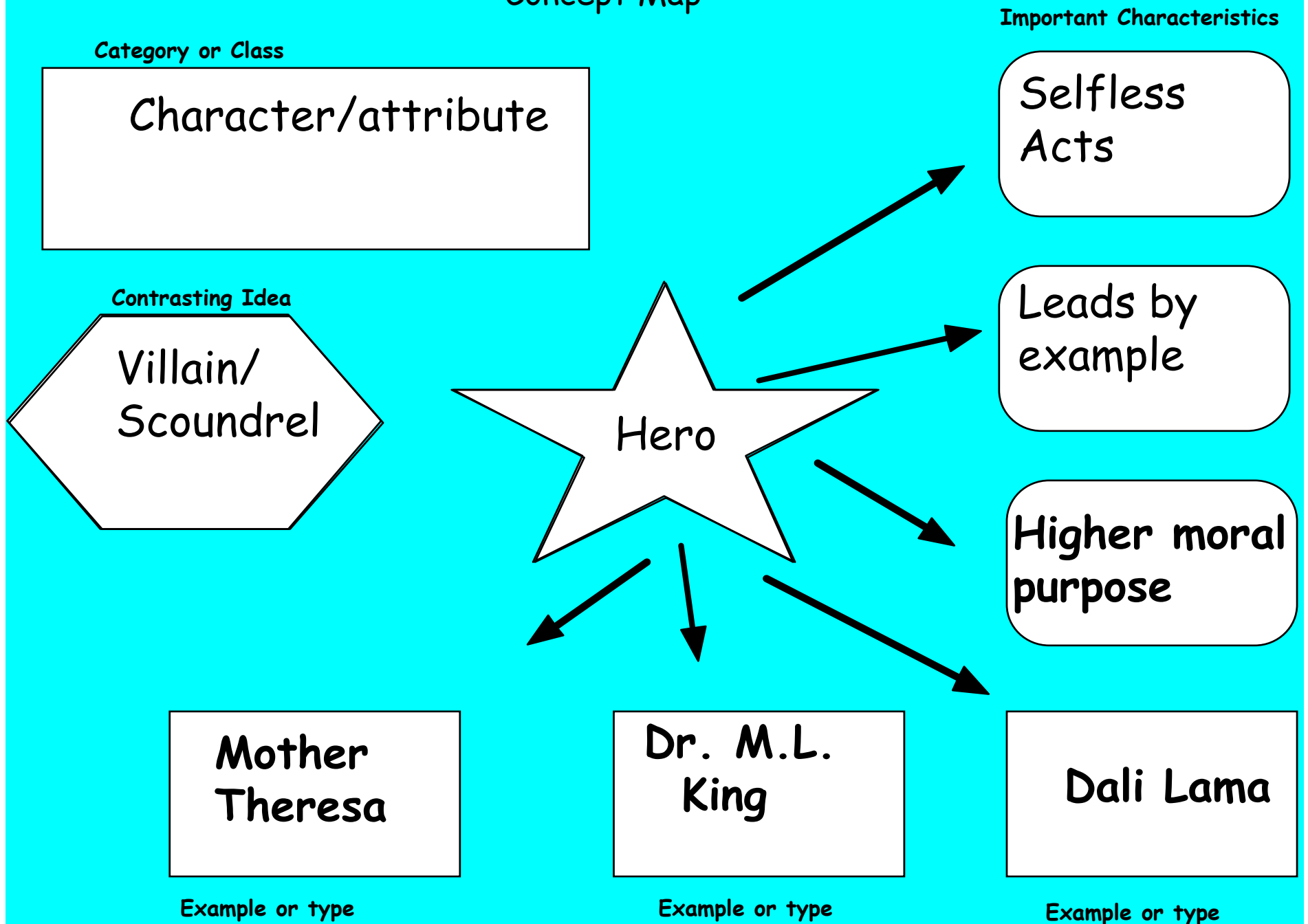


Critical Attributes: Concept Chart (Archer, 1998)

Natural resources ()	<div>✓ things</div> <div>✓ found in nature</div> <div>✓ helpful to people</div> <div></div>	oil, trees, coal <div></div>
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- Clarify key critical attributes - bullet them out
- Provide examples students will be familiar with
- Provide some key concepts before reading - and leave open a few for students to fill out as they read (with as much scaffolding as required)
- Firm up understanding w/examples & NON-examples (WHY?)

Concept Map



Concept Map/Framing Routine (Ellis, 1997)

Term: SATIRE

- * List the core idea - a summary statement or brief definition
- * List the clarifiers or critical attributes that explicate the concept
- * Brainstorm knowledge connections personal links from students word views
- * Examples - list 1 or 2
- * Non-examples - list 1 or 2
- * Check w/more examples. "is ____ and example of ____, why?"
- * Construct a sentence that "shows you know"

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Core Idea: Any work that uses wit to attack foolishness

Example:

- * a story that exposes the acts of corrupt politicians by making fun of them - Bill C.

NON-example:

- * a story that exposes the acts of corrupt politicians through factual reporting - Watergate

Clarifiers

- * can be oral or written
- * reveals/exposes vice in a clever way
- * can include irony, exaggeration, name calling, understatement
- * usually based on a real person or event

Knowledge Connections

- * Political cartoon on the editorial page of our paper
- * the stories TV comics tell to make fun of the President - like on Saturday Night Live
- * My Mom's humor at dinner time!!

Example sentence:

Charles Dickens used satire to expose the problems of Common Folks in working-class England.



Supports for Written Language

Handwriting Supports

- ❑ Experiment with pencil grips
- ❑ Experiment with atypical pencil grasp
- ❑ Limit need for some handwriting
 - ❑ Provide text that others copy from board, book.
- ❑ Provide different means-keyboards, computer
- ❑ Encourage printing or cursive depending on what is easier.

Writing Supports

- **Increase the explicitness of the assignment**
 - # of sentences
 - “frame” for paragraph/story
- **Increase the pre-writing steps (brainstorming, word banks, etc.) with support**
- **Prepare “facilitating framework”**

Note Taking supports

- ❑ **First must explicitly teach how to determine the main idea**
- ❑ **Any note taking strategy may be effective if explicitly taught**
- ❑ **Remember this hierarchy:**
 - ❑ **notes from reading material**
 - ❑ **notes from the board**
 - ❑ **notes from lecture**

Note Taking Supports

- **Student reads entire assignment, but only takes notes on a portion of it and is provided with notes on the rest.**

- **Big ideas:**
 - ▣ **better to do part of an assignment well than all of it poorly**
 - ▣ **Reduce anxiety so the student can function**

Note Taking Supports

Notes on text before lecture

- Student reads text prior to lecture.**
- Paper folded in half and notes taken on reading (book notes).**
 - Use colored pencils for headings, new vocabulary.**
- During the class lecture/discussion of the chapter, the student adds any information that has not already been included.**

Note Taking Supports



Fill in the blank Notes

- ☐ **The student receives an outline on which he fills in missing bits of information.**
- ☐ **This is appropriate for reading and lecture.**
- ☐ **This increases focus and helps identify what is important.**